

of GIBs in India is between 1,500-2,000, and that too if the species does not migrate from Rajasthan to Andhra Pradesh (two states with maximum number of GIBs). This number seems to be exaggerated as other species of genus *Ardeotis* are known for migrating long distances (Ziembicki and Woinarski in press) and species *nigriceps* might also be travelling long distances. Dharamkumarsinhji's survey conducted on behalf of WWF (World Wildlife Fund Project 453, 1970-78), estimated total population of *A. nigriceps* throughout its range in India as no more than 1,260 in 1969 and 745 in 1978 (Roberts 1991). The species can no longer be seen in Haryana, Punjab (Grimmett *et al.* 1998) and Uttar Pradesh (Allen 1918). Soon many more states may join this list of its former range of distribution. Ali and Ripley (1983) opined that not only is the distribution constricting, but also the number is dwindling due to human pressure.

We recently observed a single male *Ardeotis nigriceps* in the grasslands of Nokh Daiya, a small village about 30 km from Bikaner City. We were monitoring the wildlife census parties of Bikaner, and while moving from Nokh Daiya to Gajner Blackbuck Sanctuary we spotted GIB in the uninhabited outskirts of the villages "Rohi". This is the first authentic record of occurrence of GIB near Bikaner in the last 20 years. Earlier records of its distribution indicate that the species was quite abundant in Bikaner region. Hume

(1890) reported a collection of more than 100 bustard eggs from Bikaner region. Survey of BNHS in early 1980s reported the occurrence of this bustard species near Gajner, though they could not sight it (Rahmani and Manakadan 1990). Sighting of this endemic bird is welcome news for naturalists of the region. One pair of GIBs has also been reported to occur in the Tal Chhapar Blackbuck Sanctuary (Punia pers. comm.). The pair was first sighted in July and stayed in the Sanctuary for about two and half months.

The biggest threat to avian diversity of Gajner, Nokh Daiya, and its vicinity are the Plaster of Paris (POP) factories. About 150 factories in the area use wood to heat up the furnaces to prepare POP. One factory consumes one truck load of wood in five to six days, a huge pressure on the native flora. The factory owners claim to import the wood from Gujarat but the declining tree numbers in the region seem to tell another story. Some factories also use cow dung cakes (cow dung mixed with hay) instead of wood. The other big threat to the native birds is the construction of big water reservoirs, which will store IG canal water and after filtration this will be supplied for human use. The large grasslands on the outskirts of Gajner Sanctuary can provide ideal refuge to this endangered species of India. If anthropogenic interferences are reduced, there is no reason this species should not roost and breed here.

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8. ADDITION TO THE AVIFAUNA OF THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT –
 "WHITE-FACED" PLOVER *CHARADRIUS DEALBATUS*
 FROM ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS, INDIA

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The "White-faced" Plover *Charadrius dealbatus* breeds in the south coast of China, including Hainan. It winters locally along the coast from southern Vietnam, through the Gulf of Thailand and south along the west coast of the Malay

Peninsula to Singapore, and the east coast of Sumatra, Indonesia (Kennerley *et al.* 2008).

During a BNHS camp in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, I spotted a wader, which at first glance looked like the

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*, on the sand bar of Smith and Ross Islands (13° 18' 15" N; 93° 04' 21" E) in North Andamans on March 18, 2010. I was not sure about its identification so I clicked a few photographs. On further observations through a 10 x 5 binocular, the face looked much whiter compared to that of a Kentish Plover, and the legs were orangish with longer tarsus, more white on wings (in flight). Literature survey (Grimmett *et al.* 1999; Kazmierczak 2000; Rasmussen and Anderton 2005) could not help in identification.

After coming back I searched www.orientalbirdimages.org, unsuccessfully, for different races of Kentish Plover. I refined my web-search, and looked for the term "White-faced" Plover (after its characteristics) without knowing of the existence of such a bird. My search ended at a published paper on a bird called "White-faced" Plover by Peter Kennerley.

The bird spotted at Andaman and Nicobar Islands matched the descriptions and photographs of the "White-faced" Plover *Charadrius dealbatus* in Kennerley *et al.* (2008). After confirming the identification I visited the BNHS collection where I found six specimens of 'dealbatus', but all from south-east Asia. Therefore, this is the first record of *Charadrius dealbatus* for the Indian subcontinent.

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9. FIRST RECORD OF THE HUME'S LEAF-WARBLER *PHYLLOSCOPUS HUMEI* FROM KACHCHH, GUJARAT, INDIA

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Hume's Leaf-warbler *Phylloscopus humei* breeds from Central Asia to West Mongolia. It winters in gardens, orchards, and dry-deciduous forests in the Indian subcontinent from c. 1,400 m downwards to the plains of northern Pakistan and peninsular India south to Belgaum, Hyderabad and Anantagiri, east to lower hills of Sikkim; Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh (Ali and Ripley 1987; Grimmett *et al.* 1999; Kazmierczak 2000; Rasmussen and Anderton 2005).

In Gujarat, specimens of the Hume's Leaf-warbler were collected from Bodeli and Dabka, Baroda district, and from Mheskatri, Surat Dangs (Ali 1955). The species is not listed in THE BIRDS OF KUTCH (Ali 1945). Jugal Tiwari (pers. comm.), a former scientist of the BNHS, who has been birding in the Kachchh area since the 1990s has had no sighting of the species in the area.

During a BNHS birding camp in Kachchh, I spotted a Leaf-warbler at around 4-5 m height in the canopy of a tree

on December 24, 2009, at 17:00 hrs in the Chadwa Private Reserve (23° 09' N; 69° 28' E) near Pragsar lake, 15 km south-west of Bhuj. On further observations through 10 x 5 binoculars, I noted it to have two white wing-bars and, a dark bill and legs, suggestive of Hume's Leaf-warbler. We observed the bird for 15 minutes, it gave a short *tze-weet* call, further confirming its identity, and record of occurrence in Kachchh. The similar Yellow-browed Leaf-warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus* has yellowish wing-bars and ear-coverts, pale lower mandible, paler legs and has a different call (Kazmierczak 2000).

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